

REMARKS

Claims 2-5, 7-18 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 2-5, 9, 11 and 12 are amended, new claims 13-18 are added and claim 1 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Specifically, claims 11 and 12 are amended to be in independent form, and the dependencies of claims 3-5 and 9 are amended accordingly. Further, new claims 13-18 correspond to claims 4, 5 and 7-10, respectively, except they ultimately depend from independent claim 12. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection.

Further, Applicants thank Examiner Jagan for indicating, in an April 24 telephone interview with Applicants' representative, that new dependent claims 13-18 would be entered. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 11 and 12 contain allowable subject matter.

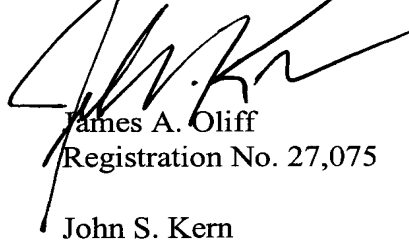
The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5 and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lyle (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0058920) in view of Rose (U.S. Patent No. 5,733,044) and claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lyle and Rose in view of Morishita (JP 11-023379). By this Amendment, Applicants assert that these rejections of claims 1-5 and 7-10 are moot.

Specifically, The Office Action indicates that claims 11 and 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this Amendment, claims 11 and 12 are rewritten in independent form, and are therefore allowable. Claims 2, 4, 5 and 7-10 now depend from claim 11 and are therefore also allowable by virtue of their dependency as well as for the additional features they recite. Claim 3 depends from claim 12 and is therefore also allowable by virtue of its dependency as well as for the additional- features it recites. Additionally, new claims 13-18 depend from independent claim 12, and therefore also define patentable subject matter.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-5 and 7-18 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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